

Dewey, George

George Dewey, b. Montpelier, Vt., Dec. 26, 1837, d. Jan. 16, 1917, was an American naval officer who defeated the Spanish fleet at Manila Bay in the Philippine Islands during the SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR. A member of the Naval Academy class of 1858, Dewey served under David Glasgow FARRAGUT during the Mississippi River campaigns of the Civil War. He had risen to the rank of commodore by November 1897, when he was ordered to command the Asiatic Squadron. Spurred by the aggressive assistant secretary of the navy Theodore Roosevelt, Dewey planned his assault on Manila well before war erupted. His descent upon Manila harbor on May 1, 1898, left the Spanish fleet in ruins and paved the way for occupation of the city of Manila by the U.S. Army and Navy on Aug. 13.

During the siege, Dewey antagonized the Filipino nationalist Emilio AGUINALDO, who shortly thereafter led the bloody insurrection against the United States. Dewey also became suspicious of the observing German naval commander, Otto von Diederichs. Returning to a hero's welcome in the United States, Dewey was promoted to admiral and made president of the navy's general board. In that position he oversaw formulation of the naval war plans against Germany and Japan. He remained on active duty as the navy's senior officer until his death.

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Bibliography: Dewey, George, *Autobiography of George Dewey* (1913); Spector, Ronald, *Admiral of the New Empire* (1974; repr. 1988).